A

SERMON

PREACHED

BEFORE THE

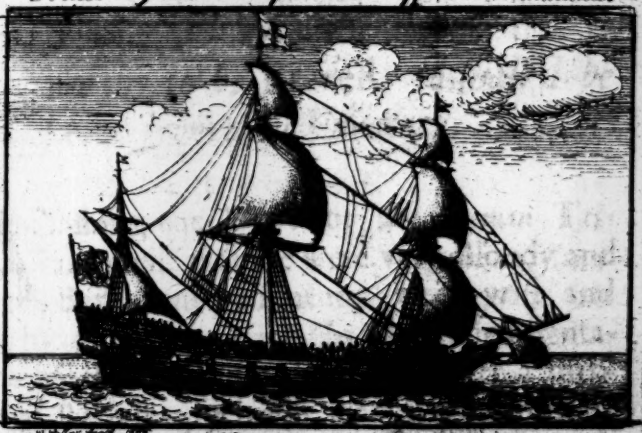
KING,

Aug. 14. 1666.

Being the Day of Thankſgiving for the late VICTORY at Sea.

By J. Dolben, *D. D.*
DEAN of *WESTMINSTER*,
and Clerk of the Cloſet.

Printed by His MAJESTIES *eſpecial Command.*



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Pſal. 18. Ver. 1, 2, 3.

1. *I will love thee, O Lord my ſtrength.*
2. *The Lord is my* Rock, *and my* Fortreſs, *and my* Deliverer, *my* God, *my* ſtrength, *in whom I will* truſt; *my* Buckler, *the Horn of my* Salvation, *and my high* Tower.
3. *I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be* Praiſed, *ſo ſhall I be* ſaved *from mine* Enemies.

AMong the Laws of the *Roman* Triumphs, as ſome were very Bloudy and Barbarous, ſo others were wiſe and worthy our Imitation. In all thoſe oſtentations of their Glory, there was ever a mixture of Religion, ſuch as it was; a ceremonious and pompous application to their imaginary

Livius Patin. Deities, *Ut ob res benegeſtas Diis immortalibus honos habeatur ſibique Triumphanti urbem invehi liceat*, was the form of their Petition who ſued for that honour. *Idolatry* (the great Mother of *Atheiſme*) was not able to extirpate the natural Conviction which every one hath in himſelf of an Almighty Power governing the Univerſe. But it kept a room; even in thoſe mens Breaſts who were ſo full of themſeves, that they expected to be adored by the reſt of Mankind. That Triumphant *Dictator*, who lorded it over the Lords of the world, before whoſe Axes *Conſuls* and *Pretors* trembled, while he trod proudly on the necks of Captive Kings, and dragg'd them chained like ſlaves after his Chariot, would at the ſame time fall down before a Captive Stock or Stone; *lowr* his *Rods* and *Lawrels*; Proſtrating himſelf with all the Enſigns of his Power and Honour, to a rotten deformed *Idol* which he had brought home in a Cart. This was another Triumph in and over their Triumphs, a victory of Religion over Infidelity in its greateſt ſtrength and exaltation; for though the Devil did ſo far debauch the underſtandings of reaſonable Creatures, as to make them worſhip him inſtead of God; yet while ſome worſhip was practiſed, and they choſe rather to adore a ridiculous abominable Deity then none; Even

by

by theſe Prophane ſacrilegious Rites, the Principle of a *God* was kept alive and warm in the minds of men; for a *Handle* whereby *in fulneſs of time*, Chriſt and his holy Doctrine took hold on a loſt World, and pull'd them back to the ſervice of the True God. Another thing I obſerve which will be more to our preſent purpoſe; They admitted not a *General* to triumph, unleſs he had finiſhed the deſign upon which he was imployed, and ſo broken the enemy that he might bring his army home with him, leaving the *Province* quiet to his Succeſſor. But upon any conſiderable ſucceſs they would make ſolemn and publick *ſupplications* to all their Gods and Goddeſſes, in the name of their abſent Commander, that he might by their favour perfect the Conqueſt which he had already happily began or advanced. This is *our* caſe. We are not yet ready for a *Triumph*, but have matter enough for Supplications and Thankſgivings. Our Enemies are not ſubdued, but by Gods help they are in good meaſure broken and defeated; Our Noble *Conſuls* are not yet ſailing homeward with Lawrels on their *ſtems*, but they are very conveniently *poſted* on the Enemies Coaſt, as Pregnant inſtances to *them* of one *victory* already obtained, and hopeful *Pledges* to *us* of another to follow. And therefore although our joy

Perduellibus victis, Confectâ Provinciâ.

be bounded and circumſcribed, to keep us modeſt, and ſober, and humble; yet have we not onely ground ſufficient, but many high obligations that our Thankſgivings be hearty, and zealous, and univerſal; full of Devotion and ſenſe of our Duty to God; expreſſed by ardent Love to his Goodneſs, Truſt and aſſiance in his Mercy, worſhipping his Majeſty by conſtant Prayers and Praiſes: the onely means to bleſs and conſeciate our paſt ſucceſſes, and to procure his aſſiſtance in our future undertakings. All which (that I may not ſeem to teach a Chriſtian Congregation onely by *Heathen* examples) you will find recommended to your imitation in the Practice of *David* upon a like occaſion. So the Title enforms us, both here, and 2 *Sam.* 22.

The Text look two ways, *Backward* upon all the Mercies and Deliverances which God had beſtowed upon *David*, which he acknowledgeth in the many glorious Titles aſcribed to God, in the firſt and ſecond Verſe, My *Strength*, my *Rock*, and my *Fortreſs*, and my *Deliverer*; my *God*, my *Buckler*, and the *Horn* of my Salvation, and my High *Tower*.

Forward, in the returns of Duty, to which he engageth himſelf: Of *Love*, verſ. 1. *Truſt*, verſ. 2. *Praiſe* and *Prayer*, verſ. 3. Upon all which he] grounds to himſelf a firm Hope

of

of being saved from his Enemies; *So shall I be saved from mine Enemies.*

I begin with *Davids* acknowledgment of Gods mercies, expressed in the Titles of *Strength, Rock, Fortress, &c.* Of all these words I shall not need to speak Particularly, they being but so many *Synonymous* Phrases, signifying one and the same thing, That God had often with great Demonstrations of his Power and favour succour'd, and saved *David.* Wherefore the Greek Translaters have chosen rather to deliver the mind and intention of the Psalmist in plain words, then to render literally the metaphors of the original. Yet must we not take this meerly for the exuberance of a *Poetical* style, much less can we imagine *David* to be guilty of that *Battology*, and those *vain repetitions* in his Devotions which our Saviour condemns in the *Heathens*, Matth. 6. 7. It was their practice to worship Vanity with Vanity, heaping in their Prayers a multitude of empty insignificant names upon their vain and more insignificant Deities. But this exaggeration in *Davids Hymn* flows from the abundance of a devout and grateful heart, labouring to empty and discharge its fulness, strugling with *Human* infirmity the narrowness of our Conceptions, and the poverty and barrenness

Καταρυγὴ στερέωμα ῥυστὴς βοηθὸς ὑπερασπιστὴς ἀντιλήπτωρ.

renneſs of Speech, and endeavouring by any means to intimate, if not expreſs thoſe tranſports and extaſies which poſſeſſed his ſoul upon the contemplation of Gods Majeſty and Goodneſs. Beſides (as the *Title* both here, and 2 *Sam.* 22. directed to obſerve before) this *Hymn* was made in commemoration of all the great things God had done for *David*, and ſo *many* various mercies could not be comprehended under any *one* Notion: His *dangers* and diſtreſſes had been ſo numerous, and both in their kind and circumſtance ſo *different*, and *Gods* ways of *vindicating* his ſervant ſo *unlike* one another; ſometimes by *warning* him of treacherous deſigns, that he might avoid or counterwork them; ſometimes by *defeating* dangerous Councels, and turning pernicious wiſdom to folly; By *diverting* his Enemies, By defending him againſt their force, or by enabling him to *overcome* it. And as ſo many and ſo different things could not be put together in one *ſtanza* of a *Pſalm*, otherwiſe then in general terms; ſo *David* could not ſatisfie himſelf but by crowding in all the general words and *Appellatives* which plain or figurative ſpeech afforded, accompanying doubtleſs every ſeveral word with a proper diſtinct act of Devotion, a new heat and flame of love and zeal; ſo that all together (like the *Milky way*) they ſeem

Τὰς δ' ἔργε Σίας θεὰς ποιεῖται προσηγορίας καὶ τὴν κατάλογον ὧν ἔτυχεν ἀγαθῶν κατάλογον ὀνομάτων ἐργάζεται

Theodoret. in Locum.

ſeem one Celeſtial fire, but are many.

That we may ſee how well ſuch a full acknowledgment would become us, how well all theſe Names and Titles attributed by *David* to God would ſound in our mouths, if we would aſcribe them with *Davids* Devotion and Affection; Give me leave to look back, not ſo far as he does, to the *whole life* of a Man, but to that new *Epocha* of our lives, the new Birth and *Reſtauration* of all things to us. Methinks that ſhould be remembred every *Thankſgiving-day*, without which we ſhould never have had any Thankſgiving day at all. Conſider then in what condition we were this time *ſeven years*, when the laſt *Effort* we could make, or Project for the recovery of our Country, was miſerably defeated; Shall I ſay by the Treachery of ſome, the folly and cowardize of others, or rather by the good Providence of God? who deſigned to ſhew us the vanity of all our contrivances, and the impoſſibility of our being ſaved by any other means, then the miraculous interpoſition of his help, and thereby make us humble enough for ſuch a Deliverance. You cannot but remember, That we did not then draw our Breath, otherwiſe then *Precarioufly*, and at the mercy of impotent *Fanatical*, and now enraged Tyrants, from whoſe *Principles*, as well as malice, nothing

was to be expected but Robberies, Massacres and Desolations; private mischiefs and publick Ruine. Men that could not possibly agree to establish themselves, and besides that they conspired to undo all but themselves; their very disagreement (had they designed nothing towards it) must necessarily have destroyed the Nation.

Who would have expected, that through this black Cloud, a comfortable light, and day of Salvation, should dawne and break upon us within a few Months? Who durst hope, or almost Pray, (in so deep a despair) that out of this horrid *Chaos*, a World of Beauty and Order should arise so soon, and we be surprised (as in a dream) with a perfect rescue from all we feared, and a quiet enjoyment of whatsoever we could wish? This was clearly the *Work* of *God*, and God alone; a meer miracle of Mercy, wrought in despight of so much actual *force* at home, so much *Councel* of all States and Princes abroad, and the yet more dangerous oppositions of our own *Provocations*, perversly and insolently contending against Gods goodness, and making it far more reasonable for us to look for a *hand upon the Wall*, writing a visible inreversible sentence of extirpation, then secretly and powerfully working our deliverance behind

it.

it. And therefore were there nothing elſe in our caſe, we muſt confeſs that this alone hath filled all the expreſſions of *David* in my Text, and we ſhall think our ſelves bound for ever to celebrate our Good God as our *Refuge and Defence, our Deliverer, the Horn of our Salvation, and our High Tower, &c.*

TO come cloſe and home to our preſent buſineſs; When the impudent injuſtice of our *Neighbours* made this *War* neceſſary, we ſoon ſaw we ſhould be engaged to contend with the moſt powerful enemies in the World, without the aſſiſtance of any friend; And, perhaps this little world of ours, were it unanimous and entire, vigorouſly exerting all its force, might be able to defend it ſelf againſt ſo much of the greater. But we are full of *Caprice*, and humorous Emulations and *Piques*, which trouble and diſcountenance, and worſe things which hinder and obſtruct Publick Enterpriſes. The infirmities of ſome, and the wickedneſs of others weaken our hands, and make us little more then *half* our ſelves: *One* ſort do no good, and *others* all the harm they can. So deſperately mad are they, that like *Appius* his Legions, they would rather be deſtroyed by any Enemy, then live to ſee their *Prince* have the honour of ſaving and defending them. *Liv. l. 2.*

These things shame us, and disadvantage our Cause; but they exalt the Glory of God, and make his help afforded us more conspicuous: For notwithstanding all this, He gave us the *last year* a glorious *Victory*, which brought forth good fruit and great effects. And *this* year he hath not been wanting to us. In the *First* Fight he brought us off without dishonour, nay, perhaps with more honour (the circumstances of the Battle considered) then a *full* Victory could have challenged, had we been evenly matched. And your Enemies Behaviour *then* will teach you how to value the Victory you have *now*. Lord! how did they insult and brave it all over *Europe*? How unable were they to govern themselves, when they pretended to have mastered *us*? If *Bonefires* and *Dutch* Wit, *French* Brags, and some *English* Despondence could have conquer'd us, we had been utterly undone. But now behold how the *Scene* is changed; we have seen our Conquerors fairly beaten; and they who lately told the World that the *narrow Seas* were become as subject to them as their own *Ditches*, and talked, as if like *Xerxes*, they would bridle and fetter the Captive Ocean, are shamefully fled like him broken and shatter'd through *those* very Seas, and left them to the possession of their ancient rightful owners.

And

And now their countenance is alter'd with their fortune: Heretofore they were like the *Grecian Wraſtler*, who being thrown, would ſpring up nimbly from the ground, and confidently aver, that he had given his adverſary the fall. Now they are more ingenuous and modeſt, but not more quiet; their Rants and Huffs are exerciſed among themſelves: And having by a calm eſcaped an imminent ruine at Sea, they are ſhaken by Tempeſts and Storms at Land; Revilings and accuſations fly like *Broadſides* among their great Captains, and the *wiſe* men cannot make the *valiant* ones agree which of them contributed moſt to their being beaten. That all this hath been done for us, and in a time while the devouring *Peſtilence* rageth in our bowels, and kills far more at home, then our Enemies can abroad; That the ſpreading Contagion, which hath ſeized all quarters of our Land, hath been reſtrained from hindring our great buſineſs, either in the *Fleet*, the *Court*, or this *City*, is of the wonderful goodneſs of God, who though he will chaſtiſe, will not deſtroy us, though he take us into his *own* hand to correct us for our amendment, yet ſuffers us not to *fall into the hands of Man*, but both in Judgment and Mercy approves himſelf our *Strength*, our *Deliverer*, the *horn* of our *Salvation*, and our *high Tower*;

and

and all this, to try us by one experiment more, whether when we have found him as good to us as he was to *David*, we will be as thankful to him as *David* was; *Love* him, *Truſt* in him, *Praiſe* him, and *Pray* to him.

1. *Love him.*

WHo can do other then love God, in whom he lives, and moves, and hath his Being? How can we refrain loving that Infinite Wiſdom, and Power, and Goodneſs, which hath made the Univerſe, and wonderfully diſpoſed it in a beautiful Harmony, and mutual correſpondence, and doth ſo ſweetly govern, and carefully ſuſtain all the parts of it? Beſide *David* knew *Love* to be the ſum of Gods Law, and the *Compendium* of mans Duty to him, and could not be a *Man after Gods own heart* without doing this before, and then what new thing doth he promiſe in my Text? Further, To love God for his Benefits onely, is but to love our ſelves, and our own conveniences; to love him as we do fair weather, and ſweet air; as we love meat, drink, and ſleep; And the inſincerity of ſuch a love would be ſure to appear upon the tryal which Satan deſired to put on *Job*: While *God maketh a hedg about us, and bleſſeth all that we have,* perhaps

Job 1. 9, 10, 11.

perhaps we ſhall love him; But if *he put forth his hand, and take all we have*, our Love being grounded on no other Principle, will go away with our goods, and we ſhall be in danger of *Curſing him to his face.*

We are to love God for his own *Excellencies*; We are to love him becauſe he *requires* it; and the more, Becauſe having a juſt Right and Power to exact from us the moſt painful hard ſervices: He is ſo gracious, as to demand no more, but that we love him; that we be not ſo much his *Servants*, as his *Friends.* This is our ſtanding ordinary Duty; Indeed, this is all we can perform; We can do no more then love God; That is both the Perfection of our Obedience here, and ſhall be of our Happineſs in Heaven. But yet this love is capable of degrees; The *affection* may and muſt be at ſometimes, and on ſome occaſions more intenſe then at others, and the *acts* more lively and vigorous, when our hearts are impregnated, and our ſervices called forth by ſignal extraordinary demonſtrations and inſtances of Gods love to us. We ought ever to love God with all our *Souls*, that is, *heartily* and *entirely*; yet this hinders not, but that the love which was always *true*, and void of Hypocriſie, proceeding (as S. *Paul* derives it) out of a *pure heart, and a good conſcience, and faith unfeigned*, 1 Joh. 15. 15. 1 Tim. 1. 5.

feigned, may now be more ardent then uſual. That the fire which was alive in the *Embers* before, may now burn out, and flame with a *Seraphick* heat and brightneſs, when God hath deſcended thus to ſtir it up, to invite, and court, and even raviſh our affections with the abundance of his favours. This *David* intimates in the very Text; For though we have it onely, I *will love*, yet the Original expreſſion ſignifies, I will *ardently* or affectionately love thee: אֲרַחֲמְךָ out of my *Bowels*, or from the bottom of my heart will I love thee, and ſo ſome of the beſt *Tranſlations* render it.

Ex intimis viſceribus. Tyc-mcl.
To t'amerò affettuoſamente. Dio dati.

Well then, if this be the Scale and Standard of our Duty in this behalf, that our Love ought to riſe in proportion to the Benefits we receive; As our Saviour indeed ſets it in the *Goſpel*, where he tells us, that the moſt obliged perſon *will love moſt*; and were it not ſo, there could be no ſuch ſin as *Ingratitude* in the World; that odious inhumane Crime would loſe all the ground and reaſon both of its guilt and ſhame. Then it will preſently be evident to all men, how much we of *this* Nation ought to love God, who hath ſo abounded in his favours to us. But how much we do love him is hard to ſay; for the expreſſions of our affection are very untoward: Like the Courſe and rude *Careſſes* of *Ruſsian* Huſ-

Luke 7. 47.

bands

bands to their Wives; our kindneſs looks much more like to *Anger* and ill nature, then Love. If to diſobey, diſhonour, injure, and affront, to do every thing that will diſpleaſe God, and *grieve* his *Holy Spirit*, be Love; then we love him extreamly.

But if there be any Truth, in what Common Senſe, and the Uniform Voice of Mankind affirm of *Love*, That it is an active vigorous Principle, working *mightily* in the hearts of Men, Provoking, and even conſtraining them to do every thing which may be agreeable to thoſe they Love, and accordingly hath produced wonderful, Prodigious effects in Humane Friendſhips. If the Holy Scriptures and Hiſtories of Times truly Chriſtian, deceive us not, in repreſenting the ſincere Love of God, as an affection which can neither be *diſſembled*, nor *ſuppreſſed*, being always cheerfully and indefatigably employ'd in his ſervice. If it devoureth *Difficulties*, caſteth out (*a*) *Fear*, (*b*) Rendreth *Labour* eaſie and deſireable, delighting not onely in the *ſweat* of its Brows, but in the moſt *Bloudy Agonies* and *Conflicts*; breaking through the Briars and Thorns of an accurſed World, and the many flaming ſwords which Satan draws againſt it; making it ſelf a Paradiſe, and Heaven upon Earth, in the doing Gods Will, in walking with, and (*c*) *dwelling* in him: For

(*a*) 1 John 4. 18.
(*b*) Pſal. 119. *ſæpe.*
(*c*) 1 John 4. 15, 16.

which reaſon Love is called, The (d) *fulfilling* of the (e) *Law*; The keeping God's (f) *Commandments*; That whereon all the Law and the Prophets (g) *depend*; The (h) *knowing* God, and being *known* of him: The (i) *Root* and *Ground* of Religion, and the choiceſt, moſt excellent (k) *Fruit* of the *Spirit*.

(d) Rom. 13. 10.
(e) Gal. 5. 10.
(f) 1 John 5. 3
Mat. 22. 40
(g)
(h) 1 John 4. 7, 8
(i) Eph. 3. 17.
(k) Gal. 5. 22.

If this be the true Character of that Divine Vertue (as indeed theſe are the Lineaments and Features by which it was moſt eminently diſcernible, in the unparallell'd Example of our dear Lord and Saviour, and in the firſt Copies taken from thence, the Primitive Martyrs and Confeſſors) Then may ſomething like to it be found in our Fancies, our Diſcourſes or Profeſſions, but not the leaſt ſhadow of it appears in our Lives and Converſations. Unhappy Nation that we are! for whom the eſſences of things, and the Definition of Duty muſt be quite changed, ere we can pretend to that diſpoſition towards God, which Nature dictates, and the bare apprehenſion of a Deity exacts! I am not willing to utter words of ill *Omen* this day; but thus much I cannot refrain from ſaying, That had God expreſſed his kindneſs to us, no otherwiſe then we have done our returns of Love to Him, we had not now been here.

Surely

Surely *David* lov'd God at another rate; elſe we ſhould not have found him in one Pſalm *panting* and *languiſhing* after him like an emboſs'd ſpent Dear; Grieved and afflicted for being kept from his preſence; Languiſhing and fainting, with deſire to get into his Temple; burnt up, and devour'd with Zeal for it in others. Not onely his Book of Pſalms, but his whole life could not otherwiſe have been ſo full of jealouſie for God's Honour, Delight in his Commands, and every thing that may expreſs a Will knit and united to that of God (as the *Chaldee* hath it here) which is the true and proper effect of Love. Pſal. 42. 1, 2. Pſal. 120. 84. 2. 69. 9.

Indeed *David* could not without ſuch a love of God, have perform'd well thoſe acts of Piety and Devotion which he promiſeth in my Text; Could not Truſt in him, Praiſe him, or Pray to him acceptably, with hope to be ſaved from his Enemies. Nor can we (however our Fancies and Dreams of Religion deceive us) and therefore muſt be ſure to take it along with us throughout. And firſt to help us, and give us ground and foundation for our Truſt in God; the next thing in my Text.

TRuſt, we know is an act of Friendſhip, and the greateſt fruit it yields, Mutual Confidence, ſpringing naturally from Mutual Affecti-

on. I can ſafely rely upon that Perſon whom I therefore love, becauſe I eſteem him ſo good, that he will not fail any juſt expectation, and whoſe affection to me is my double Pledg that he will ſurely anſwer mine. But if I doubt either of theſe two things, Love and Truſt vaniſh together; ſo that we muſt both love God, and believe that he loves us, before we can Truſt in him: For though God's Goodneſs be Infinite, and have wonderfully abounded to us, yet being free in its exerciſe, it will be preſumption and folly, not truſt, to expect any thing further from him but according to the methods of his Wiſdom revealed unto us in his Promiſes, and he hath promiſed his favours onely to thoſe that love him; And if we love him, then ſhall we Truſt in him, both with a *ſteady* and *humble* Confidence: Not murmuring when we want the ſucceſs we expect, nor growing inſolent when we have it. Love will not ſuffer us to ſuſpect his Goodneſs if every event come not up to our wiſhes; Nor cenſure his Wiſdom, though ſometimes we diſcern not the reaſon of his Providence: Much leſs ſhall we juſtle him out of his Throne, and put in for our ſhare in governing the World, ſetting up a Counter-Deity of our own Councel and Force. Theſe are generally the two great faults of men in our Condition; Not

ſub-

ſubmitting to the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God; And relying too much upon the Arm of Fleſh. And have we never been guilty of either of them? Have we never quarrelled and grumbled if there were a ſhip leſs taken then we had predeſtined in our Fancy? Any thing fallen out otherwiſe then we had ſet it down in the Gallery, or the Coffee-houſe? Do we not in the computation of our ſtrength for the War, make falſe Muſters, paſſing our own Force and Courage twice over upon the Rolls, and leaving God quite out? Imagine our ſelves ſufficient Deliverers and Saviours to our ſelves, and forgetting that God is our *Strength, The Rock of our Defence, and the Horn of our Salvation.* I fear ſomething of this may have been the Provocation which hath mov'd God to Diſcipline us with his own Sword, the Plague, at home, while he ſaves us from that of the Enemy abroad. Lately to ſhew us danger in an unequal Encounter, and even now to check our Victory, and ſnatch much of its fruit out of our hands when we were juſt graſping it, and ſeem'd to our ſelves almoſt poſſeſs'd of a full and final Conqueſt: And this hath he done, not by animating our drooping Enemies with new Courage, or ſtrengthning their feeble hands with freſh force and activity; but meerly by withholding the

Breath

Breath of his Wind, that we may be convinced upon how Particular and conſtant attendance of Providence upon us, our felicity depends; which if it be ſuſpended but for one moment, we preſently falter; if the influence of God's Power and Goodneſs (that ſoul of our affairs) do not exert it ſelf in every inſtance, immediately our nerves are relaxed, and our ſpirits damp'd, and we begin to languiſh without ſtrength or motion. This being duly conſidered, I hope will engage us not onely to Love God more ardently, and Truſt in him more entirely and firmly, but doing both, to Praiſe and Pray to him more affectionately, That ſo we may both now and always be ſafe from our Enemies. *I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praiſed; So ſhall I, &c.*

I fear there is not ſo much of my time left, as of my Subject; Wherefore I will join theſe two Duties of *Prayer* and *Praiſe* in my Exhortation, as the *Chaldee* and *Greek* do in the Text it ſelf, who read both of them; *Praiſing I will Pray*: And they cannot be more joint and united in any Expreſſion, then they are in their own natures, *Praiſe* being one, and the moſt noble Part of Prayer, that which is moſt peculiarly and eminently the Worſhip of God; For though when we Petition him for the Benefits we deſire, or againſt the Evils

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we fear, we do tacitly and by consequence acknowledg both his Power and his Goodness, yet do we more expresly and directy Honour and Glorifie God, when our souls are pour'd out in cheerful Hallelujah's, hearty and joyful celebrations of his holy Name, who is the Lord *Blessed for ever!* *Whoso offereth me Thanks*, (a) Ps 50.23. and Praise, he (a) *Honoureth* me, saith *David*; and how much *David* thought so, appears by this that all his Psalmes are so full of those oblations, as in the Original they are justly called, *The Book of Praises*: And why are not our lives as full of them too? We mistake our selves, if we think this Duty confined to great Festivals and solemn Thanksgivings, to depend upon our Calendars, or the Kings Proclamations; Holy *Job*, in the depth of his sorrows, and the midst of his great distresses, when he had at once lost both his Wealth, and his Children, all the supports and comforts of this life, Even upon the Dunghil (b) *Blesseth the* (b) Job 1 21. *Name of the Lord his God, who had both given, and taken away*; To teach us, that we can never be in a condition so wretched and uncomfortable, wherein we may not find somewhat, for which we ought to Praise God, and adore and magnifie his goodness towards us; not onely although we be afflicted and cast down, but even because we are so.

VVould

Would we allow our ſelves ſome time to meditate ſeriouſly on the incomprehenſible Excellencies of the Divine Nature; To conſider how all God's Attributes have been employed and exerciſed for our Good, To underſtand what it was at firſt to be created out of nothing, and put into a capacity of hapineſs; What need we had of Mercy, and how unworthy we were of it, when by a fooliſh Diſobedience we had obliged and confined our ſelves to endleſs wo; and then at what a rate our Redemption was procured; That by the Bloud of Chriſt, not onely Pardon, but Eternal Happineſs was purchaſed for us; Would we recollect the ſeveral inſtances of God's Care and Providence in the preſervation of our lives, and all our worldly concernments; but eſpecially the continual endeavours of his Grace and Holy Spirit, to conduct us ſafe to the enjoyment of that Bleſſedneſs which his Infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs have prepared for us: Such Reflections as theſe (would we ſuffer them to ſettle and fix upon us) muſt needs fill our ſouls with the *Love* of God, and our mouths with his *Praiſes*: This would kindle in us a zealous Concern and Paſſion for the Glory of God, and we ſhould apprehend no happineſs upon Earth, but in the promoting his honour among men; Our hearts would

would be like *Altars* of Incenſe, with a perpetual Heavenly fire burning on them, and ſending up continually our Euchariſtial oblations, that odour of ſweet ſmell made of holy Oyl and fragrant Spices, Love and Joy in the Lord, and the Cloud of this Incenſe would cover the *Mercy Seat*; The aſſiſtant Angels would (as the *Jews* ſay) go up in this Cloud to offer our Lauds unto God, and bring back from him Grace, and Peace, and Salvation in returns unto us. 'Tis for want of this (becauſe we are ſuch ſtrangers to God and our ſelves) that the life of every Chriſtian is not a continual Euchariſt; That we come ſo ſeldom, and with ſuch coldneſs and Indevotion, to join with the Church Militant in her Sacrifice of Praiſe, the Holy *Communion*, that great peculiar Hebr. 13 15. inſtance of our Religion, wherein Chriſt hath commanded us to continue a perpetual thankful remembrance of all God's Mercies, and particularly of his Death (which comprehends them all) and there to connect our poor Prayers to his powerful eternal interceſſions, that ſo both our Petitions and Praiſes may be acceptable to God. 'Tis for want of this that the Children of God are ſo unwilling to have their Converſation in Heaven, to join and communicate in this Honourable, delectable Duty of Praiſing God with the Church Triumphant,

where Saints and Angels inceſſantly Praiſe God, having nothing to ask or beg of him, but in behalf of us. We deceive our ſelves groſly and dangerouſly, while we think we can be Religious without Praiſing God often, and heartily, and cheerfully, in Private as well as Publick. Alas! our loud and clamorous Prayers, how many or importunate ſoever they be, ſeparate from this, are but Hypocritical Devotions, terminated in our own intereſts, not in God, or his Glory: And our Prayers would be as few as our Praiſes, but that the love of the world and our ſelves, which damps the love of God in our hearts, and ſuffers us not to delight and rejoice in Praiſing him; ſometimes prompts us to call on him, to fly to his help in diſtreſs; make us look up (like the *Jews* in the Wilderneſs) when we feel our ſelves *ſtung*. And this ſtrange fire on the Altar, looks like the True, burns and blazeth for a while, and makes us think our ſelves very Religious, when alas! we are onely very ſore, or very fearful, and our *neceſsities* and *diſtreſſes* are devout, not we. I need not Preſs that further, whereof every one hath a ſufficient conviction in this, that while our caſe is thus, Devotion comes upon us onely by *catches* and *ſtarts*, and even as in an *Ague*, we have as many *cold Fits as hot*. When the violence of that impulſe

pulſe which warm'd us, is ſpent, we freeze again, when the Calamity or terror which put us into a haſty fermentation is taken off, immediately we ſettle upon our lees; VVhen he *kills* us, *then we ſeek him*; we turn early and enquire after God, when we remember that *God* is our *ſtrength*, and the moſt *High* God is our *Redeemer*; but as ſoon as the *Judgment* is removed, and we have ſwallowed and *digeſted* the *Mercy*, we turn back and tempt the *Holy* One of *Iſrael*; VVe think no more of his *Hand*, and of the Day wherein he *delivered us* from *our Enemies*: VVhereas were a habit of Religion firmly ſetled in us, rooted and grounded on the love of God, and conſcience of our Duty, it would be both Permanent and Uniform in all its exerciſes. VVe ſhould not think to uſe God onely as a Property or Convenience, but adore the Majeſty of our Almighty Soveraign Lord, and delight as much to *Praiſe* him for the Benefits we have received, as to receive any new ones from his hand! VVhat then ſhall I ſay? Shall I reproach a Chriſtian Congregation, by exhorting them to love God? I am aſhamed to do that, and I have ſaid enough already, (if any thing be enough) by telling you, that without Loving God, you *ought* not to *Truſt* in him, you cannot *Praiſe* or *Pray* to him; your Praiſes will be but *Flatteries*, and Pſal. 78.

your Prayers *indignities* and *affronts*. Shall I desire you to be more frequent, and more zealous in your Praises? Sure I need not request you (if you mean to go to *Heaven*) to practice that beforehand here, which must there be your onely Employment; to beseech you not to think that a trouble now, which then will be your *Happiness* and Glory: I will rather tell you, that God needs none of all these things from you; Your Love does not *benefit*, nor your Praises *exalt* him; *He* is the same Omnipotent Majesty, Infinitely happy in *Himself*, whether you depend on his Protection, and beg your daily Bread and all other good things at his hands; or whether neglecting both those Duties, you live as *without God* in the *World*: But *He* is pleased, when you *love* and *honour* him, because he is delighted in the obedience of his Creature; and nothing is so agreeable to him, as that we should give him those *occasions* to *love us*, and do *us good*: which if you thus qualifie your selves to receive his favour, I can assure you he will do, as the Prophet *David* here assures himself. Upon these Terms we shall be safe from our *Enemies*. *So shall I, &c.*

SO *shall I be safe*, otherwise *I shall not*: We cannot promise our selves to be safe by our own strength, For were it never so great, it may

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be *matched and exceeded*; And were we never ſo much Maſters of our *Enemies*, we are not Maſters of *Occaſion*; We may, and have been obliged to fight upon *diſadvantage*; We are not Commanders of the *Seas*, nor of the *Winds*, which God keeps in his *Treaſure*. Laſt year they were helpful to us, They were otherwiſe this year. And if we cannot protect our ſelves, Who ſhall protect us? I have heard, that one of our enemies hath ſaid with *contempt* and *ſcorne* enough, We have no Friend *But God*! *Does he make ſuch But's*? I pardon his *raillery*, and heartily embrace the good *Omen* of it. If we have no Friend but God, then we have him, and if he be our Friend, I am ſure we need not fear what man can do againſt us. Neither they, we have ſo oft conflicted with, nor they who hover further off, expecting an opportunity to fall upon us when we are *ſore*, can be able to do us harm. He is too much a Coward, that dreads any Enemy, when he hath Omnipotence it ſelf to *ſecond* him. But he is more a fool who may have ſuch a *Second* and *Patron*, and yet will be ſo far wanting to himſelf, as not to procure his favour and aſſiſtance; Eſpecially, when the terms upon which it is to be had, are ſo eaſie, nay ſo deſireable, that the *Condition* of acquiring it is more valuable then the *thing* it ſelf, it being a far greater happineſs to *love* and *ſerve* God as we ought, then

to be ſecured by him from all the harm this world can do.

For my part, it ſhall ſuffice me that I have brought the buſineſs *home*, and laid it at your own doors. I dare ſay there is no Perſon in this Congregation, who wiſheth not all ſafety to his *Countrey*, *Honor* to the *King* and *Victory* to his *Armes*. You muſt therefore think it an advantage to be directed how your ſelves may have the ſatisfaction to bear a part in the atchieving all this, which you do (and are ſo much concerned to) wiſh. I will preſently take of that regreat which your gallantry hath raiſed in many of your thoughts, for your being detained by employment, or any other circumſtance of your Conditions, from ſhewing your courage, and gaining a ſhare in the honor of the late *Engagements*. *Courage*! break off your *Sins* by *Repentance*, live a *Chriſtian*, *devout*, *holy life and pray earneſtly* for Gods gracious favor and ſuccour, ſo ſhall you ſerve the King as conſiderably as any *Volontier* in the Fleet. Here is a Proje& to raiſe an *Army eaſily*, *ſpeedily*, without *charge* or *trouble*, and ſuch a one as could I ſee formed, I ſhould be ſo much tempted to deſpiſe all our Enemies: No *Age* or *Sex* but are fit to be liſted in it. The impotent *Old man* on his *Couch*, the *Lady* in her *Cloſet*, the *Sick* and *Weak* upon their *Beds*, without *Danger* or *Fatigue* at *Sea*, every one in their own ſtation, where infirmity

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or tenderneſs hath ranked them, may fight and be certainly *victorious*. Whoever can but mortifie a *Luſt*, *forſake a Sin*, kindle an ardent *love* to God in his heart, ſhed a *Tear*, ſend up a *Prayer*, a *ſigh or groan* to Heaven; may thereby without any other Artillery *reach* and *gall* the *Enemy* at what diſtance ſoever. By the ſecret invisible influence of your Devotion, you may ſtrengthen the hearts and hands of your Friends. While your hearts are right with God, and you hold up *pure hands in Prayer* (like *Moſes* in the Mount) theirs will be victorious in Battail. But then remember that though, when *Moſes* his hands were up, *Joſua* prevaild, yet when they were ſet down, *Amalek* prevail'd. Succeſs varied and ſhifted from the *People* and *Army* and *Cauſe of God*, to the *accurſed Nations* whom he had vowed to *deſtroy*, upon every *intermiſſion of Moſes Prayer*. And therefore unleſs we think Gods honour more concerned in our affairs, then in theirs whom he had choſen and promiſed, and avow'd to all the world that he would give them the ſpoils and inheritance of their Enemies. Unleſs we think our adverſaries more accurſed then thoſe whom God had *ſworn* to have *War* with for *ever*, whom he had *devoted* to *ruine* and *extirpation*; We cannot hope to proſper and prevail upon other Terms then *Joſuah* did. And truly you are too unkind, if while your Countrey-

Exod. 17. 11.

Exod 17. 14, 16.

try-men *fight* for you, you will not Pray for them; While they patiently endure *Toil*, *Sickneſs*, *Wounds*, nay, *loſe* their *Lives*, you will not *amend* yours, will not do ſo delightful, ſo pro-profitable a thing, as to *love* and *ſerve God*, both for *their ſakes* and *your own*, to procure *Peace* and *ſafety* in this *World*; and eternal *Happineſs* in that to come. Which God grant us all for the merits of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

FINIS.